

Talking Points

The BLM is developing a National Mountain Bicycling Strategic Action Plan to ensure that the use of mountain bicycles and other mechanized vehicles on public lands is managed in an environmentally responsible way in regard to ethics, conflicts, and impacts; and that opportunities for this activity are not only recognized, but provided for by the agency and through its partnerships, on public lands where appropriate.

The purpose of this Action Plan is to provide guidance to the BLM field offices, interest groups, and individuals to implement on-the-ground actions and resource protection measures.

In addition to providing field guidance there are a number of reasons why the BLM is developing this action plan. Those reasons include:

- fulfilling BLM's need to update its 1992 Mountain Bicycle Strategy;
- recognizing the changing demographics, increasing populations, emerging technologies, and issues unique to mountain bicycling;
- providing for consistency among BLM state and field offices regarding management approaches;
- making more effective use of existing staff, resources, volunteers, and partnerships;
- assessing planning, environmental and regulatory needs; and
- fulfilling the recommendation by BLM's National OHV Strategy to develop a plan focused on mountain bicycling use.

The Action Plan will focus specifically on mountain bicycle use while also recognizing the emerging trends and technologies of mechanized vehicles that may warrant management of new types of use in the future.

This action plan is the second component of a trilogy of action plans focusing on recreational uses of the public lands and comprehensive travel management planning. The first was the National Management Strategy for Motorized Off-Highway Vehicle Use on Public Lands, which was completed in January 2001. On completion of the National Mountain Bicycling Strategic Action Plan, a nonmotorized/nonmechanized strategy will be developed to meet the needs of visitors such as hikers and equestrians.

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) provides direction for planning and development of management tools that enable the BLM to conserve the landscape and resources while allowing people to recreate on BLM-managed public lands.

Mountain bicycling was an emerging use on public lands when most of the existing land use plans were developed. With the increase in mountain bicycle use, new technology, and BLM's land use planning schedule, mountain bicycling management guidance is needed.

This Action Plan is neither a decision document nor a new regulation. Land-use plans are, and will continue to be, the principal decision documents guiding BLM land managers. This strategic action plan will only provide general guidance to BLM land managers nationwide on ways to deal with mountain bicycling management issues. There will continue to be site-specific activity plans to address local issues.

The BLM will develop the plan through a public process that will elicit ideas and proposed solutions that can be used in the preparation of this strategic action plan.

There will be opportunities for the public to become involved in the development of this plan. Public involvement will include a 38-day comment period on the draft plan. Comments can be submitted electronically through BLM's national website at www.blm.gov or through the mail.

Comments may be mailed to: Tim Smith, Team Lead; National Mountain Bicycling Strategic Action Plan; BLM-California State Office; 2800 Cottage Way, Room W-1834; Sacramento, CA 95825-1886.

Field office input was requested before release of the draft and final plans.

The BLM anticipates the completion of the National Mountain Bicycling Strategic Action Plan by the end of the calendar year 2002.